HORTICULTURE

It has been suggested that we drop the name Rosa Sinensis from our nomenclature and instead use the name Tropical Hibiscus. While it is true that most of our varieties have the basic stock of the original Chinese species, it is also certain that species from many areas have also contributed their part to the modern hibiscus that we know. Among these exotic species are H. Schizopetalus from Africa, H. Cameronii from Madagascar, H. Arnottianus from the Hawaiian Islands and probably others from many lands. It has also been reliably reported that hybrids with H. Syriacus or Althea are in existence.

Now that fall is here you should be getting your seed producing program under way, since the cooler weather is apparently necessary for satisfactory seed production. May we suggest that you make your crosses with a definite purpose and not use inferior varieties simply because they seed easily. One seed pod produced from a planned outstanding cross will please you more than many seeds that result in varieties that prove disappointing after all the care given them. Select your parents for plant vigor and quality of bloom rather than for size of bloom alone and somewhere along the line you may hit the jackpot with a new variety that combines many desirable qualities.

It is not too late to give your plants a feeding of fertilizer that is low in nitrogen and high in potash in order to harden them up for the colder weather to come. A dormant plant with little tender growth will survive cold that otherwise might damage it severely or possibly kill it outright.

Remember that spraying with oil emulsion type material is for mild weather. If scale becomes a problem during the winter use only sprays such as Parathion or Malathon that contain no oil.

WHERE IS THE LARGEST HIBISCUS PLANT IN FLORIDA? We believe that our readers would be interested in knowing how large some of our really old plants have become. If you know of a "giant" in your vicinity, send the measurements of height, spread and girth to your Bulletin Editor and the "champions" according to variety will be published in later issues.

Do you watch your plants for sports? The theory has been advanced that cosmic rays from outer space are the cause of occasional damage to the cells in a growth bud so that later growth will exhibit entirely different characteristics from the original variety. Also, some varieties are apparently very unstable in their make-up and seem especially prone to vary. A good example of this is the variety Hurricana which in only a few years has sported into at least ten recognized varieties. If you see a clear variation on a plant and if it is definitely superior in form or different in color, try to keep it under observation. If the twig continues to hold true, propagate it for further observation. This will be a new variety just as certainly as any seed and may well be worth introducing.

Some of our breeders and collectors are beginning to turn to true miniature types, especially in varieties that have foliage and habit of growth in